

# EVALUATION SUMMARY

## INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM SPECIAL INITIATIVE PROJECTS

The U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Program (IV Program) brings current and emerging foreign leaders in government, media, politics, academia and other fields to the United States to confer with professional counterparts and gain a deeper understanding of the United States and its institutions and culture. The IV Program Special Initiative Projects were designed after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to bring leaders from countries with significant Muslim populations to the United States to exchange information, establish deeper dialogue, and increase mutual understanding between the people of their countries and the people of the United States.

The results reported here are based on surveys completed by 85 of 95 participants (89% response rate) from the ten IV Program Special Initiative Projects conducted between February and October 2002. The participants hail from 20 countries (Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, the West Bank and Yemen) and represent a variety of professional backgrounds.

### Key Findings

#### ➤ **Increased Understanding**

As a direct result of the IV Program experience, participants reported an increased understanding of various topics. The average ratings for each topic – based on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent) – are reported below.

The people and culture of the United States: <b>4.32</b>	U.S. government and politics: <b>3.88</b>
U.S. foreign policy: <b>3.79</b>	U.S. democracy and institutions: <b>4.22</b>
Diversity in the United States: <b>4.41</b>	Religion in the United States: <b>3.86</b>
Effect of 9/11 on global peace and security: <b>4.31</b>	Effect of 9/11 on the people of the United States: <b>4.40</b>

#### ➤ **Mutual Understanding**

Participants were asked on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent), the extent to which the program experience helped to accomplish the following goals (average ratings reported):

- Promote closer relations between the United States and their country and/or region: **3.99**
- Strengthen ties between people of the United States and their country and/or region: **4.10**
- Promote mutual understanding and mutual respect: **4.01**
- Provide a more informed and broader perspective of the United States: **4.44**
- **96.4%** reported that international exchanges are an important long-term investment in global peace and security.

#### ➤ **Sharing Information**

- Participants reported that Americans they met were willing to share information with them: **92.9%**
- Participants also felt that Americans they met were willing to listen to them and appreciated the information they shared with them: **91.8%**
- Participants reported that they intended to share the information about the United States or the ideas they acquired while in the United States with their professional colleagues (**97.6%**), family and friends (**97.6%**), and home communities (**92.6%**).
- Participants felt they were able to better inform Americans about their country or region: **80.0%**
- Participants believe that they had an impact on the Americans they met while in the United States: **65.0%**

#### ➤ **Perceptions about the United States**

Participants were asked to disagree or agree with a range of statements about the United States based on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The percentage of participants that responded 4 (agree) or 5 (strongly agree) with the following statements:

- The U.S. views its bilateral relationship with my country as important: **54.8%**
- The U.S. is interested in building partnerships with my country: **63.9%**
- Americans I met in the U.S. have little understanding of my country: **71.4%**
- The rights of religious and ethnic groups are protected in the United States: **73.8%**
- Americans value volunteerism: **73.5%**

#### ➤ **Program Impact**

- **100%** of participants reported that their programs helped to develop an interest in professional collaboration with people they met in the United States.
- **69.4%** of participants reported that the program was extremely valuable to them *professionally* and
- **67.5%** reported that the experience was extremely valuable to them *personally*.